

Not What It Appears

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Summary: This is my conclusion to the 2000 season finale. Mulder returns, but all is not what it seems.

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NOT WHAT IT APPEARS

BY DAVID ANAKIN

Scully looked at the ceiling over her hospital bed, then reached for the folder on the nightstand. This was the fourth time she had read it. It was the results of the test ran on her baby. Her baby. She still couldn't make herself believe it. But it was true, no mistake. The test said the baby was female and completely human. Scully was by no means an expert on human/alien hybrids. In fact, everything she knew would just fill one sheet of a legal pad. But there were no signs in the test. So how did I get pregnant? Scully asked herself. Of course, there were cases where woman had children even after doctors said they couldn't. The human body was still something of a mystery. Her Mom would call this a miracle. She wasn't sure she believed in them anymore. But what else could this be? There was only one man who could be the father, and how he would take it she had no idea. Her thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Come in." she called.

It was Ass. Director Skinner, "Good news."

"Yeah. I'm out of here tomorrow. I'm going to start looking for Mulder as soon as I can."

"You don't have to. He's back."

"What? How?"

"He walked into an all night cafÃ© near Ahoskie, N.C. last night. I'm on my way to pick him up now."

"Well what are you doing here?" Scully said then added, "Sir."

"I was on my way to see you when I got the call. He seems okay too. He's in the hospital down there." Skinner answered then saw the folder. "Test results?"

Scully nodded, "It's a girl. And 100% human."

"Glad to hear it. Have you told the father yet?"

"Sir. With all due respect-

Skinner held his hands up, "Say no more. None of my business. Well I better get going. I'll have Mulder back in no time." He turned to leave, but stopped when Scully called him.

"Sir, don't tell Mulder anything about this. I'll tell him when the time's right. When I'm sure he's all right."

Skinner agreed and left Scully alone. She looked around the room and saw someone had brought her some more flowers. There was a card attached so she got up to look at it. It was a nice but inexpensive arrangement. Violets in a pink glass vase. There were other flowers in the room all with 'get well soon' cards with them. She opened the card and read 'Congradulations! Hope it's a boy. Alex Krycek'.

She tore up the card and stuffed it in the trash. Then she threw the flowers and vase in after the pieces of card.

"How the hell did he find out?" She asked the other flowers. If they knew, they were not talking.

Skinner had just stepped into the parking lot when he saw a man wearing dark baggy clothes, a hat, shades, and a long beard. Skinner knew who it was.

"Trying out for ZZ Top? Gonna be hard with only one arm." Skinner said.

If Krycek was smiling under the fake beard, Skinner couldn't tell. Instead he asked, "Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"I don't see how that's any of your business. Don't you have anything better to do with your time then follow me around?"

"You'd be surprised what I make my business Walter. And don't forget, you'll living on borrowed time. Borrowed from me." Krycek said patting his coat pocket. "I know you came to see Dana. How is the mother-to-be? Be terrible if something happened."

Skinner grabbed Krycek pulling him close, "You stay away from her. Or I'll-"

"You'll what?" Krycek interrupted pushing away, "You do anything besides what I tell you to do and I'll make life very hard on you. Now. Does this have anything to do with Mulder?"

Skinner drove his car to the airport. He told Krycek about Mulder, he didn't have a choice. I bet he already knew, Skinner thought, he just enjoys playing games too much. As long as those nano-machines were in his blood, Skinner had to follow Krycek's orders. He couldn't risk moving against the bastard until he knew more about them. But how could he? Test had showed nothing. There wasn't a thing in his blood that didn't belong there. But Krycek told him they were wrong. Skinner knew it was true. There had to be some way of getting out from under Krycek, he just couldn't find it.

"So, Mulder's come home." Krycek thought. How did he do it? Was he rejected? No. If that were the case they wouldn't have taken him. Krycek would just have to wait and ask Mulder what happened. But right now he was more interested in the ship that brought Mulder back. He'd missed it the first time, but he had a second chance. He wasn't going to blow it. Krycek flipped open his cell phone, he had travel plans to make.

Skinner got to Ahoskie without any problems. His friend owned a single-engine plane and flew him to the nearest airport, which was in Franklin VA. From there Skinner rented a car and drove to Ahoskie. But he had a bad feeling, this wasn't going to be an easy pick up. But what is easy when Mulder is concerned. He found Mulder's room and knocked.

"Come in."

Skinner went in and saw Mulder was wearing the same outfit he had on the night he disappeared. Two days ago.

"So how are you?" Skinner asked.

"I'm good. You?"

"Fine. The Doctor tells me you didn't want to be examined. Why not?"

"Because Sir. I'm fine. Why didn't Scully come to get me?"

"She had paper work to do." Skinner lied, "You were abducted Mulder. You have to let a doctor look at you."

"There's only one Doctor I trust enough to have a look at me, and she's doing paperwork. So the sooner we get home the better." Mulder said grabbing his coat and walking out the door.

Skinner followed in silence. They rode the elevator in silence. They drove about a mile out of the city in silence. The silence was finally broken by the car's tire suddenly going flat.

"You wantta call for back-up?" Mulder asked as Skinner pulled over.

They got out and the back window on Skinner's side exploded. Skinner rolled over the hood and ducked down next to Mulder.

"That explains the tire." Skinner said pulling out his gun. "But what I'd like to know is why?"

All was quite now. A red Pick-Up passed but didn't stop. Another shot hit the top of their car.

"Told you we needed back-up." Mulder said checking the bullets in his gun. A green station wagon came the other way but didn't stop either. Skinner saw movement in the woods across the road. Together they came up with a plan. Skinner called 911 on his cell phone and told the police who he was and what was happening and hung up. He watched for more movement and fired two shots when he saw it. At the same time, Mulder ran across the road and into the woods. Whoever was in the woods got off another shot but missed. A blue Pick-Up started to slow down but Skinner waved them on. The driver gives him the finger and sped off.

Mulder was behind a large tree, watching the blue Pick-up speed off. He fired two shots and Skinner ran across the road. One of the branches over Mulder's head exploded so he ran deeper into the woods for better cover. Staying low he came to a deep ditch. There was no way he could jump it without a running start. He heard a snap and spun around in time to see the shooter coming at him. The man was tall and wearing camo and pointing a rifle with a silencer attached. Mulder fired, but only nicked the man's leg. That was when Mulder felt a hot pain in his chest and fell into the ditch.

"Oh fuck!" Johnson said as he watched Mulder fall. Krycek's orders were that Mulder be taken alive. But when Mulder shot him, he fired back without thinking. He had no idea where Skinner was, so by the time he found him Mulder would be dead. If the guy wasn't already. Johnson prayed Mulder was well enough to carry to his 4x4. Maybe he could keep Mulder alive long enough for his boss to get whatever it was he wanted. Johnson ran and jumped into the ditch. Mulder was gone. That was good news, bad news. Good, because his target wasn't badly injured. Bad, because he had lost his target.

"Do you have any idea how much this hurts?" a voice asked from behind. Johnson turned and saw Mulder standing there pointing at the hole in his chest. This was one of those look before you leap deals, if Johnson had seen Mulder before he could have kept him covered. Now Mulder was covering him, no chance of missing this time. Johnson's eyes went wide when he saw Mulder wasn't bleeding red blood but green! He had been with Krycek long enough to know what that meant, he also knew it was too late. He fell face down in the water, dead.

Mulder watched the man fall, but didn't feel any sympathy for him. One of them had to die, right? Skinner's voice reached him. He couldn't let the Assistant Director see him like this. Mulder wasn't prepared to kill Skinner, not unless he had to. Luckily, Mulder had an idea. He grabbed the assassin's rifle and a jagged rock. The bleeding had stopped and the stream had carried away the blood and the wind had taken care of the scent. By the time Skinner found him, Mulder had smeared mud on shirt and cut it in places to hide the bullet hole. He also shot the man with the rifle and explained that they had fallen into the ditch while struggling over the weapon.

The police showed up by the time Mulder and Skinner made their way

out of the woods. The body was retrieved and the agents went to the station to file a report. Mulder cleaned himself up while Skinner called to tell his friend what had happened. The second trip to the airport went without incident.

Krycek watched the plane carrying Skinner and Mulder lift off into the sky.

"Damn it!" he said catching the attention of an elderly couple near by. He just glared at them and they quickly moved away. Krycek watched the plane become a dot then ran to his own plane. It was older than the one he just saw off, but it got him where he wanted to go. Johnson was going to have a lot of explaining to do. Mulder was his only link to the alien ship. If it dropped Mulder off, then it must have dropped others off too. Mulder was the only one he heard of. But why? Why take them only to bring them back a few days later. Maybe Mulder didn't have the right stuff. Well, Krycek was going to find out. It was only a matter of time, but how much time did he have? Mulder hadn't gotten away; as long as he had Skinner he would know every move Mulder made. He boarded the plane where Johnson was already getting clearance from the tower. Must have saw me coming, he thought. Krycek sat in the co-pilot seat without a word; he could wait until they were airborne to find out what happened. Johnson didn't seem at all nervous, but that's not what bothered him. The tower ordered them to wait another 15 minutes, so Johnson went back to his checklist, holding the clipboard in his left hand and the pen in his right. That's backwards, Krycek thought. Johnson was left-handed. This man was as imposter and Krycek had a good idea who it was. But the weapon he needed was in the back of the plane.

Krycek stood, "I'm gonna hit the head before we take off."

Johnson just nodded. Krycek got to the rear and opened his suitcase. From a hidden compartment in the lid he got a small silver cylinder. He pressed a button and a long thin needle popped up. A one armed man would have a hard time flying a plane, so Krycek decided to wait until they landed in D.C. It was a risk, but Krycek enjoyed a good risk. He put the weapon in his pocket and turned back to the cockpit only to have his chin meet by the Bounty Hunter's fist. Alex Krycek fell into darkness.

When the plane landed, Scully was waiting with a car. She watched Mulder come down the steps and wave at her. He looked like he just came back form a vacation not an abduction. She waved back and walked over to hug him.

"Never thought I'd see you again." She said as they let each other go, "Don't ever do that to me again."

"I just wanted you to see what I went through." Mulder smiled.

"I still say you were as much a pain in the ass to them as you are to us. So they kicked you out the first chance they got." Skinner joked.

"Well, I understand you wouldn't let anyone examine you in North Carolina. So I'm going to have to do it."

"Okay! Lets do IT." Mulder said getting in the car.

Before Scully could get in Skinner whispered, "You weren't supposed to be out today."

"I'm fine Sir. Besides, I have to make sure Mulder's alright."

Krycek didn't receive such a pleasant greeting in D.C. The Bounty Hunter was staring down at him. Krycek tried to stand, only to be shoved back in his chair, for the third time. Looking around he realized he knew where he was. It was a tastefully decorated office. Lots of oak and leather. This was the office the Syndicate met, before they were deep roasting away.

"He's awake." The Bounty Hunter called. A door in the back opened and a tall dark haired woman came in. Mulder's ex-girlfriend.

"Don't tell me you're in charge now? The project's really gone to Hell hasn't it?" Krycek asked.

"No. But you may wish I were." She answered sitting on the edge of the conference table, "The doctor's are just finishing with him."

The door opened again and Krycek's eyes went wide when he saw who walked in. Going to Hell suddenly didn't seem like a bad idea.
"Impossible! You're dead!" Was all he could think to say.

The Cigarette Smoking Man stood in front of him. Stood! This man was in a wheelchair before Krycek killed him, but here he stood.

"Who made you the authority on what's possible and what isn't?" Smoking Man asked, "Really Alex, I thought you were smarter than that. How much more do you have to see before you realize nothing is impossible."

Krycek looked at the face in front of him. After he was over the shock he saw this man was not only standing but didn't have that smoking hole in his throat. The Smoking Man had a lot of alien knowage, but even their techonogy couldn't do this. Unless.

"You're a clone." Krycek said.

"I always knew you were a bright boy." Said C.S.M. taking a drag off his cigarette. Then he nodded to the Hunter. Krycek found himself helpless in the alien's iron grip. "Only this body's a clone. I was dying; it was only a matter of time. The project isn't over and the only person I can trust to finish it is me. There was just enough time to take the information from my old body and put it in this one. I won't bore you with the details, but the brain isn't as completed as people think. I was prepared for anything. But I will admit, I never thought you would have the balls to kill me."

"No one's going to follow a clone. Even if you do have the same memories." Krycek managed to get out.

"Only a handful of people know. I was very careful to keep my condition a secret." C.S.M. said then nodded to Fowley who pulled out a small remote control. She then pressed the button on it. From behind the door there came a soft hiss, which grew louder, followed

by people coughing, then falling, then only the hiss, which slowly dropped in volume until it stopped.

"I plan for everything. I was going to bring you in, but I ask you how can I trust someone who killed me?" The Smoking Man said. Another nod and the Bounty Hunter's grip tightened.

"Stop!" Krycek gasped, "I have information you can use."

"What do you know?" C.S.M. asked.

"Let me go, and I'll tell you."

"Answer the question and I'll consider it."

Krycek knew didn't have a choice. He talked, "Mulder's back. I have someone on the inside, close to him. He can lead us to the ship. And Scully is pregnant."

"I know Mulder's back. Who do you think sent him back? And as for your insider, I can get to Skinner just as easily as you did. You were lucky to get him, but you never did use him properly. And I'm happy for Scully. After all, I mean it possible."

"I have more." Krycek started. But it was too late. The Smoking Man nodded and the Bounty Hunter snapped Krycek's neck. The last thing Alex Krycek saw was C.S.M. blowing smoke in his face.

Scully couldn't remember the last time she enjoyed as examination as much as this one. Not only was her partner back and safe, but also Mulder had turned the exam into a running comedy routine. He made one joke after another, not all were funny but she didn't care. She almost told him about her pregnancy, but didn't want to spoil the good mood they were in.

"Well, tell me Doctor. Am I alive?" Mulder asked.

"I'll have to say yes. All I have to do now is take a blood sample."

"Is that really necessary? Do I look sick? Can't we just put this behind us and get back to work?"

"Mulder. I felt fine after my abduction too, but look what happened. I don't like that happening to you."

Scully tore the paper wrapper of the needle and noticed that Mulder looked really worried. She was about to ask if the needle was jogging a memory but then she noticed the room was starting to spin.

Mulder was very worried. Scully was coming closer with the needle. If she took that sample, it was all over. He saw her stop and drop the needle, and then she started to sway. Mulder jumped up and caught her before she hit the floor. He laid her on the table and made sure she was breathing normally. He left the room to find a doctor. He couldn't let anything happen to Scully or her baby, they were the reason he was here. It was his job to find out where the baby had come from and why.

"There. How do you feel now?" A nurse asked while bringing Scully

around.

"What happened?" Scully asked the woman. She was maybe in her 30's, dark skinned and a little over weight.

"You passed out." The nurse answered, "Are you taking anything? Have a condition of some kind?"

"Well I'm fine." Scully answered sitting up, "Just a little light headed."

"Maybe you should just get some rest." The nurse said then she left the room to finish her rounds.

Mulder helped Scully up, "You want to tell me what happened?"

"No. But I guess I'll have to sooner or later. But first let me get that blood sample."

"Oh no. You need to get some rest. I bet you haven't been in a bed for days." Mulder said.

"Well I am starting to get hungry. I guess the blood test can wait until tomorrow. How about dinner."

She and Mulder left the hospital and went to a greasy spoon of a dinner near by. Over burgers and fries, she told her partner she was pregnant. Mulder was surprised, almost too surprised, the expression on his face was like someone who found out about a surprise party but was acting so the people who put it together wouldn't be hurt.

"Well, Mulder. Say something." Scully demanded when she had enough.

"What ever you do, don't name her after an animal." Mulder said smiling. Then he reached for her hand and she took it. She felt the same charge she always did, more than friendship but less than love. Too bad I can't do an autopsy on emotions, she thought. They stared at each other for a few minutes.

"You're keeping her?" Mulder asked.

"Of course I am. I'll quit the F.B.I. and raise her alone if I have to." She answered. The question made her angry.

"We've been though too much for me to let you go it alone now. When you need someone the most."

They went back to Mulder's apartment and watched 'Plan 9 From Outer Space' and pig out on popcorn and ice cream.

"I can put pickles on your ice cream if you want." Mulder said from the kitchen.

"I'm not going to become one of those women. As a doctor, I know better. Now get in here this is the best part."

Mulder brought in the bowls as two men fought as the spaceship caught fire and equipment shorted out around them. The humans made their

escape as the aliens took off in the still burning ship.

"If those aliens are suppose to be so advanced, why don't they have a fire extinguisher on board?" Scully asked.

"Some aliens just don't plan as far ahead as others." Mulder answered. The movie ended and Mulder stood and took the tape out of the VCR.

"Okay Mulder, remember our deal? Now we see 'Steel Magnolias' and get that look off your face. You can make fun of mine like I did with your's." She said, and waited for some kind of Mulder-like remark. Instead he put the tape in and quietly sat back down.

"Don't you think it's time we started calling each other by our first names?" He asked.

"You always said you hated your first name."

"What can I say, people change." Mulder said and then he kissed her.

When it was over Scully said, "You'll do anything to avoid this movie." They laughed as Mulder picked up the remote.

Out the window and across the street in another apartment a man watched the kissing agents with a pair of infrared binoculars. He looked like Peter Graves, only maybe younger. This face brought some attention, but not as much as his real face would have brought. He put down the biconlores and picked up a cell phone. When the other side picked up, he made his report.

"They know. We may have to step up our plans."

He listened to his instructions. He would follow them to the letter. Even if he disagreed with them, which was the only way they could win this war. Orders, and weapons. Their newest weapon was across the street and the enemy was too close for comfort.

TO BE CONTINUEDâ€|. .

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file.